

THE EXACT SPOT OF THE PRESIDENT AT THE TIME OF THE FIRST SHOT.

If you go to Dallas and try to reenact the crime, you won't be able to. Neither will any official body with powers not possessed by a private citizen. Why? Because the most important landmark in the picture has been destroyed!

No official body will ever again be able to do a perfect reconstruction. By replacing the destroyed landmarks, an approximation may be possible, but it cannot be a perfect duplication and without a perfect duplication a perfect reconstruction is not possible.

Two of the 3 road signs on the north side of Elm Street have been removed. I had earlier suspected it, but I found proof of it in the deposition of Emmett J. Hudson, grounds keeper of Dealey Plaza ~~(7H562)~~ (7H562, July 22, 1964). In discussing Commission Exhibit 875 and when questioned about the various signs, Hudson said, "Now, they have moved some of those signs. They have moved that R. L. Thornton Freeway sign and put up a Stemmons sign."

Mr. Liebeler inquired, "They have? They have moved it?"

Mr. Hudson, "Yes, sir."

Mr. Liebeler, "That might explain it, because this picture here, No. 18, was taken after the assassination and this one was taken at the time - No. 1."

Zapruder's films were taken over and around the original Stemmons sign, the middle sign on that side of the road. Even if for a future reconstruction the signs should be replaced in the approximate location in which they were, there is no possibility that they could be put at exactly the same angle and exactly the same elevation, even if they are put in approximately the same spot.

The importance of this becomes exceedingly clear in an examination of the indefiniteness of the quotations from FBI Agent Shaneyfelt's

testimony used in the report. On p.98 the Commission said he testified "that the ^{waving is seen} ~~mayxxxxxx~~ on the Zapruder movie until around frame 205, when a road sign blocked out most of the President's body from Zapruder's view through the lens of his camera. ... When President Kennedy again came fully into view in the Zapruder film at frame 225, he seemed to be reacting to his neck wound by raising his hands to his t_hroat."

This is, in a volume of understatement, one of the most understated facts. Again notice the inaccurate description, "neck wound", and an examination of frame 225 shows the President has both of his hands up to his throat. On p.105 of the report the Commission says, "the President's reaction is 'barely apparent' in frame 225, which is 15 frames or approximately eight-tenths second after frame 210, and a shot much before 210 would assume a longer reaction time than was recalled by eyewitnesses at the scene."

If the President, grasping at this throat with both hands and with both elbows up parallel with the ground, was "barely reacting", what would the Commission call a "strong reaction"? Actually, the Zapruder films show that within a short time the President lowered his arms.

The Commission also calls both sides of its coin "heads". It assumes the President had to react rapidly, and elsewhere in the report it assumes that the Governor had to react slowly. It also assumes, as the text of the report makes clear, that it was impossible for the bullet to have come from any place else. It doesn't assume only that it didn't; it assumes that it couldn't.

Other questions also arise. In addition to the destruction of the sign evidence, there was the destruction of the background evi-

dence arranged by the trimming of the hedge on the Houston Street side of Dealey Plaza, which had formed an excellent background for Zapruder's films. Are we to assume, then, that the tree which for a time blocked the view from the sixth floor window was also not pruned? And the reenactment occurred on a quiet day, so far as we know from what the Commission reveals in the 26 volumes of hearings and exhibits. We know that on the day of the assassination there was a brisk wind from the north. So we not only had the branches of the tree presumably in motion, but the whole tree may have leaned in a different direction than the day of the reenactment.

According to the testimony of Agent Shaneyfelt, the reenactment was made beginning 6 o'clock on the morning of ~~May~~ May 24, 1964. This is in Vol. V, p.143. Among the things that necessarily follow is an entirely different pattern of shadows which is an important factor in examining the other photographic evidence that the Commission appears to ignore, evidence that is quite positive in its nature.

In examining Zapruder and also in examining Hudson, the Commission used a photograph having nothing to do with Hudson that it called "Hudson Exhibit No. 1", in Vol. XX, p.173. Zapruder identified himself in ~~it~~ ^{it}.

There are a number of conclusive observations that can be made from this photograph.

First of all, the President is looking to his right, and it seems as though his body is turned partly to the right. At that point, he is hidden from Zapruder by the then existing ^{the} Stemmons Freeway sign. In the foreground of this picture is a shadow of a tree. This tree extends as far as the Secret Service followup car. It can be only one tree. It is the tree on the southwest corner of Elm and Houston

In Dealey Plaza. It shows clearly in the background of the Zapruder films. Knowing the space between the cars which was estimated by most of the agents at 20 to 25 feet, and the length of the cars, it is possible to locate precisely the President at that instant.

This picture was taken by Phil Willis. At that moment Willis was taking a picture looking at Zapruder and Zapruder was taking a picture looking at Willis. Knowing the location of both photographers, everything in the picture can be plotted from the straight line drawn between them.

It is clear from what I have seen of the Commission's film that this is the last one taken in which the President is clearly visible before he was struck by the first bullet. It is remotely possible that he had at this instant just been struck.

Now the Altgens photograph can be treated in the same manner. Knowing where Altgens was standing when he took the picture, and if he doesn't remember, there is reason to believe that this can be precisely identified from the Zapruder film which shows two photographers in the approximate location in which Altgens must have been. (See LIFE for October 2, 1964, films marked No. 4 and 7; see also exhibit 885, the slides from the Zapruder film). In the Altgens film the President has already, clearly, begun to bend forward. Also, Mrs. Kennedy, clearly, has extended her gloved hand in his direction. With equal clarity it can be established that the Presidential car at this particular fraction of a second had just begun to pass the beginning of the fourth white road stripe with its left front wheel. Again returning to the LIFE picture, because they are clear and the Commission's are not, in the one Numbered 2 in which the President has both of his elbows above ~~the~~ a straight line with his shoulders,

both of his fists to or above his neck, Mrs. Kennedy has not yet extended her hand, and the tree mentioned above is clearly visible in the background. The film numbered 3, which in the LIFE version shows no tree in the background, also shows Mrs. Kennedy extending her hand to the President. These can be checked against the Zapruder film clip for the exact frame number, which is not as accurately as possible done with the magnifying glass I possess. In order to see these pictures clearly, it will require a more powerful magnification to identify with certainty the exact frame number.

Hence, it would seem that by the time Mrs. Kennedy extended her hand, or by the time the Altgens picture was taken, or by the time the left front wheel of the Presidential car had reached a fixed landmark, the fourth road strip, enough time had elapsed on the Zapruder footage for the tree to no longer be in ^{the} ~~glix~~ background.

These photographs also show, especially the frames⁶ beginning with 193 and running to 200, perhaps even to 205, that the President was turned to his right. This is clearly¹ visible in frames³ 193 and 194 and it does seem as though not only his head, but his body is turned, his head more sharply.

Shaneyfelt said he could see the President waving in frame 205 . This may be correct. But on what basis does he decide that^{with} only the very top of^{the} the President visible in this frame that it is a wave rather than a reaction to being shot? This is even more clearly visible in frame 203. The basis for all such decisions was a pre-conception that the shot had come from the sixth floor of the Book Depository Building and no place else, and that the tree was in exactly the same position as it was the day of the reenactment, and that there was not a clear view of the President until frame 210.

If any other possibility is considered, and even though the Commission didn't it surely should have, the significance of the Altgens and Willis films, especially in connection with the Zapruder, Nix and Muchmore movies, becomes clear. Even more so if the angle of the wound in the President's body, as revealed in the Bethesda Naval Hospital charts, is considered along with them.

I will come to this when I get to Shaneyfelt's depositions, but the manner in which the Commission got the shots from the Zapruder film appearing in Vol. XVIII should be ^{borne} ~~xxxx~~ in mind, especially in connection with the great lack of clarity in all of these pictures as compared with much larger enlargements in LIFE. LIFE had bought the original film from Zapruder. The Commission had copies. LIFE was reluctant to surrender its film, so it showed its original Zapruder film to the Commission and then made 35 mm. negatives from the original 8 mm. strip. The most casual comparison of the smaller Commission versions with the larger LIFE version will show that the lack of clarity in the Commission's is not a technical necessity.

Only the closest examination of Shaneyfelt's testimony, which I have not yet made, will reveal which signs he used as landmarks in his reconstruction. There is an exhibit, 883, a drawing of the area, in which, as is customary with almost all of the Commission's drawings, all of the essential information is illegible. This again is just a question of the scale in which the essential knowledge is reproduced and as in other cases, so in this case; it is much too small to be read, even with a magnifying glass. It must be borne in mind that, as of May 24, the signs may not have been moved. It should also be borne in mind that nowhere have I seen any complaint from the Commission about the destruction of this evidence. Isn't this strange

for such outstanding lawyers? Or for the intelligence expert, Mr. Dulles? Or for Mr. Rankin, with his long experience in the Department of Justice? Or for the former district attorneys on the Commission's staff?

To make Zapruder's position clear, it was approximately where represented in the October 2 issue of LIFE on p.47, the aerial view. The President was shot a considerable distance, relatively speaking, before the second lamppost on Zapruder's side of the street came into frame. Even accepting the Commission's thesis that the earliest frame on which the President could have been shot was No. 210, the difference between that and 225, accepting the Commission's figures of 18.3 frames per second, which is unusual, is $8/10$ of a second, quite some distance for an automobile.